

Exercise during haemodialysis

Exercise is important for all people, including those with kidney disease. It helps to maintain your mobility, fitness and quality of life. While you need dialysis, it is good to be as active as you can, this includes exercising whilst having your dialysis treatment, known as intradialytic exercise. The following information is intended to guide you with regard to exercising during haemodialysis.

How do you exercise during dialysis?

After being cleared to exercise by a member of the renal team, you will need to make the dialysis staff aware that you wish to exercise. They will bring a small portable cycling machine to you and attach it to the end of your chair.

How much do people cycle during dialysis?

The cycling intensity and duration will be left for you to decide. You should not push yourself too hard and should feel comfortable throughout. Research has shown that you will achieve optimum benefits with around 60 minutes of moderate intensity cycling each dialysis (or 3 times a week).

What if I feel like I can't exercise?

It will be possible for most patients to exercise. Some patients who have a need for a wheelchair day-to-day still find it possible to cycle during dialysis. The best approach is to start slowly and as you get used to it, you can increase the speed, intensity and time as you feel comfortable. Hopefully you will enjoy cycling and make gains as you progress.

What are the benefits of exercise during dialysis?

There are many benefits to exercising during dialysis and different people can feel and experience some or all of these. Exercising on dialysis can:

- improve your ability and comfort when doing day-to-day tasks.
- improve your sense of wellbeing, mood and enjoyment of life.
- improve the efficiency of the dialysis machine cleaning your blood.
- increase your general fitness and energy levels.
- improve your confidence and independence at work and home.
- relieve the boredom of being on dialysis.
- improve your nutrition and appetite.
- reduce unhealthy fats and increase healthy fats in your blood.
- improve your blood pressure.
- help to reduce cramps.
- If you are diabetic, it may also improve your glucose control.

This is just a brief introduction. If you would like more information, please ask a nurse at your dialysis unit and they will be more than happy to answer your questions. There are also 'exercise champions' who are happy to talk to you about exercise on dialysis.

What is Kidney Beam?

Kidney Beam is an exercise and lifestyle management app designed for kidney patients and offers a way to improve physical activity levels. Registered individuals can choose from a selection of live movement or on-demand classes, including yoga, Pilates, high intensity training (HIIT) and other online sessions. Kidney Beam also has exercises that can be undertaken during a dialysis session.

The programme was developed by NHS health professionals and other qualified instructors, including those with lived experience. The classes are suitable for all abilities and kidney condition, and at any stage of kidney disease.

Kidney Beam is a subscription service for renal patients, and you can register at:
www.kidneybeam.com

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Lister Haemodialysis Unit:

- Telephone 01438 284152

St Albans Haemodialysis Unit:

- Telephone 01727 897588

Chiltern Kidney Centre:

- Telephone 01438 288850

Bedford Haemodialysis Unit:

- Telephone 01438 286750

Harlow Haemodialysis Unit:

- Telephone 01279 278205

Leaflet information

**You can request this information in a different format or another language;
please speak to your doctor or nurse.**

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